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Hove Park School & Sixth Form Centre

March 2016

Equality Policy

1 Introduction and context

1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for Hove Park School & Sixth Form Centre includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Please also see
Anti-bullying Policy
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Relationship & Sex Education Policy

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – students, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion,
- advance equality of opportunity and
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

1.2 Our school within the wider context

As a school we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our students and groups of students. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit our school community.

School contextual data and equality information can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

Data available to the school includes school census, attendance, attainment, Raiseonline and surveys.

1.3 Our vision statement about equality

At **Hove Park School & HP6** we seek to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence. We want all who attend our school and college to develop a positive sense of belonging and their own identity.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

We believe that effective equality practice will contribute to raising aspirations and achievements, keeping children safe from bullying and prejudice and from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities where everyone feels a sense of belonging. We welcome our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and seek to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We work to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have protected characteristics:

- age (staff only)
- sex
- race
- disability (physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities)
- religion or belief (also no religion or belief)
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage or civil partnership (staff only),

We have an Accessibility Policy and Plan which addresses our statutory duties to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Our Accessibility Policy and Plan can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

2 Our approach

2.1 Introduction

As well as the specific equality objectives published on our school website alongside this policy, the school takes a whole school approach to equality, community cohesion and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life. We actively seek out opportunities in and outside of the curriculum to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

2.2 Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We also aim to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by the protected characteristics (where possible) and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;

- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- promote acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Support students to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider;
- Encourage students to act fairly and to have an awareness of unconscious bias;
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

2.3 Support for pupils / students

2.3a Reasonable Adjustments and Auxiliary Aids

We have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and this includes a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. We will also consider potential adjustments which may be needed for disabled pupils generally.

Our Accessibility Policy and Plan can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

2.3b Pastoral Support

Alongside universal provision of pastoral support through Form Tutors, Assistant Heads of Year and Heads of Year Hove Park School seeks to target further pastoral support for groups or individuals where appropriate. This may be internal or through links with other agencies.

2.4 Admissions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on any of the protected characteristics.

The Local Authority is the admission authority. Local authorities and schools must not discriminate against students in admissions or in their day to day operations, such as in the allocation of students to particular classes, there are a few exceptions:

School curriculum and collective worship are not covered by legislation affecting discrimination on grounds of religion or beliefs
Schools may treat disabled pupils more favourably than others if it prevents them being at a disadvantage

2.5 Exclusions

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions including by groups of pupils to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

2.6 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils/students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

2.7a Hiring out our premises

Our Equality Policy includes governors, and members of the public who use and find themselves on school premises as part of the business of the school.

If our premises are used by other organisations to run activities or provide services which are not connected with the school, then we are not responsible for the activities or services provided. However, we will do our best to ensure that groups contravening the school and college values and Equality policy will not be permitted to hire rooms or use our grounds.

2.7b Commissioned services (buying in services)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

3 Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant (unless specific requirements are intrinsic to the role) until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. (See the *Safer Recruitment Toolkit* for further guidance.)

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; we will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantage and we will work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Via the Human Resources service of Brighton & Hove City Council we have access to advice and guidance on equality matters relating to staff through the intranet, bulletins and advice given by HR professionals. Relevant policies are listed below:

Safer Recruitment Toolkit (includes equalities in employment issues in schools)

<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/equalities/StaffForums/Pages/default.aspx>

Schools Absence Management Procedure & Guidance (includes Fact sheets on Absence & Disability and Access to work; Q&As for Managers on Mental Health; Reasonable Adjustment Guidance for Headteachers)

<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/AbsenceManagementandOccupationalHealth.aspx>

Whistleblowing Policy

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/Documents/HR%20for%20Schools/Model%20Whistleblowing%20Policyfor%20Schools%20-%202015.doc>

Wellbeing Framework (includes guidance on Work-Life Balance, Dignity & Respect at Work and Violence at Work/Incidence reporting)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HealthSafety/Pages/WellbeingatWork.aspx>

Access to general information on impact on staff of the Equality Act (including the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Disabled Applicants)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/HR/ManagingTeams/Recruitmentandinduction/Pages/Equalitiesanddiversity.aspx>

Access to main council equality advice through the Wave Intranet –

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/Equalities/Pages/default.aspx>

In schools where there are more than 150 employees there is a legal duty to publish equality information about them.

Hove Park School & Sixth Form Centre's equality information can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

Our staff team have equality duties and have undertaken training for example in unconscious bias. We seek to identify areas for development and undertake training to help them further understand the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

4 The roles and responsibilities within our school community

All who work in the Hove Park School & Sixth Form Centre have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination. This policy states the specific responsibilities of the members of the school community and the methods used to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities.

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- In partnership with governors deal with breaches of this policy

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

Our students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- respond to and report any equality related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

5 Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying

5.1 Definitions

We recognise that hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, transphobia, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy defines bullying in the following way:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via social media or the internet) and usually involves an imbalance of power. It can involve verbal taunts, name calling, physical injury, and damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability, or

because a child is in care, has caring responsibilities or mental health issues. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else.

Adapted from; *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, 2011

We define 'Prejudice related / hate incidents' in the following way:

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against an equality group whether intentional or not can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice related incident. In some settings prejudice-based incidents are referred to as Hate Incidents.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore and understand the complexities of equality issues. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We are aware of the types of discriminatory incidents that can occur including:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender or gender identity, religion or belief;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief.

We will record hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families,

sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

Whenever an incident or bullying occurs we will risk assess the target or victim using these four questions.

- Is the victim safe? (if not, consider immediate response)
- Is the victim vulnerable or especially upset?
- Has the victim experienced this prejudice-based incident or prejudice-based bullying before?
- Has the reported incident(s) had an impact on the wellbeing of the victim? Or on a group of individuals such as a family?

Dependent on the answers to these questions we may offer the victim or victim's family the option of a referral to the Police or Community Safety Casework Team who will then offer a full Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk assessment and if necessary coordinate a multi-agency response taking into account the victim's wishes. The Community Safety Casework Team can be contacted by calling 01273 292735 or by e-mail at communitysafety.casework@brighton-hove.gov.uk

We will also refer community members experiencing hate incidents in their community to this service.

5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to prejudice based bullying and incidents

- Students are reminded that all staff are anti-bullying and students can report to any member of staff.
- Form Tutors and Assistant Heads of Year are highlighted to students as particularly accessible.
- The student *Recognise, Refuse, Report* Campaign reminds students to report bullying.
- The student *Recognise, Refuse, Report* Campaign supports students to understand the difference between bullying and conflict within friendships.
- Year Teams and students with leadership responsibilities will support students to resolve conflict within friendships.
- Year Teams and students with leadership responsibilities will support students to celebrate diversity and challenge prejudice.
- Year Teams will support students to resolutions through Restorative Approaches.

The Anti-Bullying Policy can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

6 Involving the school community in the development of our Equality practice

The development of this policy and of our equality objectives involves the whole school community. We endeavour to involve and listen to a wide range of individuals and groups. We recognise that all groups listed below have an important contribution to the development of our equality practice in the and seek through our equalities objectives to find ways to further engage all and monitor the development.

- Our students
- Our staff
- Our school governors
- Parents/carers
- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups
- Our partners in the community

7 How we identify our equality objectives

In line with our statutory duties we publish annually equality information and publish and report on equality objectives. We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty.

Our Equality Objectives can be found on the school website alongside this policy.

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence from data including student outcomes, surveys and also from work with other schools, Brighton & Hove and other partner agencies.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

Partner schools and OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our review/inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through student voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

In Brighton & Hove there are a range of services which support the equality agenda and help us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action.

We have established and growing links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

8 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was published on 21st March 2016. It will be actively promoted and disseminated.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.